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DEPARTMENT FOR S/CT

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/24/2018  
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SUBJECT: STEMMING THE FLOW OF FOREIGN TERRORISTS INTO IRAQ  
FROM IRELAND

REF: INGALLS (S/CT) E-MAIL OF 04/15/2008

Classified By: Ambassador Thomas C. Foley; Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

¶1. (S) Summary: The Ambassador briefed Justice Minister Dermot Ahern on June 19 on the S/CT presentation, "Stemming the Flow of Foreign Terrorists into Iraq: Presentation to the Government of Ireland" (reftel). Ahern indicated clearly that he wants to thwart terrorist activities on Irish soil. He said that the Government of Ireland would cooperate closely with U.S. intelligence services -- "within the parameters of Irish law" -- to thwart terrorist threats. Nonetheless, Irish law, the courts, and government bureaucracy sometimes make it difficult to aggressively pursue alleged terrorist links and can complicate cooperation. End summary.

¶2. (S) The Ambassador, EMBOFFs, and Station Chief briefed Minister of Justice, Equality and Law Reform Dermot Ahern on June 19 on the S/CT presentation (reftel), explaining that the purpose of the briefing was to acquaint the newly appointed Minister with a terrorist threat. Ahern was accompanied by senior Justice Department officials Sean Aylward, Secretary General, Ken O'Leary, Assistant Secretary, and Patrick Forsyth, Assistant Principal.

¶3. (S) Stating, "We don't want Ireland to be a base for murder or for an attack on another country," Ahern declared that the Government of Ireland would cooperate closely with U.S. intelligence services -- "within the parameters of Irish law" -- to thwart terrorist threats emanating from Ireland. He stated that adequate legislation is in force to enable Ireland to deal effectively with terrorists. Ahern noted that the Irish Government was particularly concerned about the potential for attacks on the United Kingdom, partly due to the open border between the two nations, but it also appeared they had some intelligence indicating an elevated risk of an attack in the U.K. In this regard, he stated that Irish intelligence authorities were liaising closely with British, French, and Israeli intelligence services in relation to foreign terrorists. (Note: The primary Irish intelligence operation is a division of the Garda (police), which falls under Ahern's jurisdiction as Minister of Justice. There is also a military intelligence wing of the Irish Army, which reports to the Minister of Defence. End note.) Ahern went on to say, however, that the Justice Ministry did not intend to micromanage Irish intelligence operations. Rather, he said, the Ministry would stipulate that close cooperation was authorized with U.S. authorities on issues of foreign terrorists and step back to let the intelligence authorities do their job. He declared, however, that the Justice Ministry would be tracking developments closely and that he was prepared to "mediate roadblocks."

¶4. (S) Comment: Ahern is clearly committed to thwarting terrorist activities on Irish soil. Nonetheless, Irish law, the courts, and government bureaucracy sometimes make it difficult to aggressively pursue alleged terrorist links and

can complicate cooperation. There may also be a dollop of complacency in Irish efforts to pursue alleged terrorists -- there have been no foreign terrorist acts against Ireland or launched from Ireland into Europe ... as yet.

FOLEY